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**EDGAR ALLAN POE – THE INVENTOR OF THE  
DETECTIVE FICTION GENRE**

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Edgar Allan Poe - The Inventor of The Detective Fiction Genre

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## 1. Introduction

The bachelor's thesis is focused on Edgar Allan Poe, especially on his detective fiction short-stories. Poe is well known for his horror stories or poems, especially "*The Raven*" or "*Pit and the Pendulum*", but he is also considered to be the founder of the detective fiction genre <sup>[1]</sup>. The detective fiction genre grew more popular and Poe contributed to its development by specifying the basic elements and features.

The main objective of this thesis is to show Poe's great work in the world of literature, especially in the field of the detective fiction. It is supposed to remind Poe as the writer of detective stories and point at the influence of his horror and mystery stories which are often projected into his other works. Least but not last, to prove that Poe was really the first writer who laid the foundations of a classic detective story, and to show the elements of a detective story in his work "Murders in the Rue Morgue". The last objective is to find the joint features and similarities in Poe's three detective stories, compare them and comment on them.

The thesis is divided into several parts and chapters. The theoretical part consists mainly of descriptions and a summary of Poe's story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue". On the other hand, the practical part deals with analysing Poe's stories and comparing them.

The first chapter deals with Poe's life and mysterious death. It describes his unlucky childhood, university life, his publishing career and also his social life. It shows how he lived and it partly explains the reason why he wanted to become a writer. It also deals with his personality and character.

The second chapter is divided into two parts: Poe's most famous works in the world of literature and his style of writing. The famous works are further sorted by their character: poems, tales and hoaxes. It presents Poe as a poet, a tale writer and a journalist. In every category, there are introduced Poe's major works. The second part of this chapter is dedicated to Poe's style of writing. It includes typical features he used while writing.



The third chapter has three main parts. The first one introduces detective stories and the detective fiction genre. It is explained, what the detective story is and the typical elements are presented. There is also explained when was the first detective story written and how it influenced the other authors. Further there are mentioned the most famous detective writers and their major works. The second part is dedicated to Chevalier Auguste Dupin, Poe's fictional ingenious detective, who solves cases by using mathematics and probability <sup>[2]</sup>. There is a character's description, according to his three appearances in Poe's stories. The topic of the third part is a plot summary of Poe's first detective fiction, "Murders in the Rue Morgue".

The fourth chapter is the practical part; it deals with the analysis of above mentioned story. There are presented the elements and features of a detective story and it is proved that they were used in Poe's "*Murders in the Rue Morgue*". There are some example parts taken from Poe's story where the elements are manifested. There is also a commentary attached.

The fifth chapter deals with Poe's other two detective stories: "*The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*" and "*The Purloined Letter*". It has two parts. In the first part, there is a short summary of both of them. The second part of this chapter contains an analysis of all three stories. The joint features of Poe's three detective stories are specified and properly commented on.

To accomplish the objective of the thesis, it is necessary to read all Poe's detective stories. These three stories are used as primarily sources for the thesis. There is a part of his story attached to this thesis for better image of Poe's style of writing and also a few pictures. There is also attached an extended version of a summary of Poe's "*Murders in the Rue Morgue*".

## 2. Life of Edgar Allan Poe

### 2.1 Early life

Edgar Allan Poe was born to travelling actors on January 19, 1809 in Boston. He was the second of three children. He had an elder brother William Henry Leonard Poe and a younger sister Rosalie Poe. <sup>[3]</sup> He never really knew his parents: his father, David Poe, Jr., had been a drunkard who abandoned the whole family and his mother, Elizabeth Arnold Hopkins Poe, passed away three years after her son had been born. <sup>[4]</sup>

Unfortunately, Poe had to be separated from his siblings, who went to live with other families. He was taken in by John and Frances Valentine Allan, a wealthy tobacco merchant and his wife, and moved to Richmond, Virginia. <sup>[5]</sup> The Allan's family had Poe baptized in 1812. They gave him the second surname "Allan" but did not legally adopt him. <sup>[6]</sup> In 1815 the whole family including Poe sailed to Great Britain. They stayed for 5 years and Poe was given a very good education. Poe's staying in Great Britain influenced him for his whole life.

Poe had a good relationship with Frances, but he did not make a bond with John. <sup>[7]</sup> It may have been caused by his preferring poetry and writing over profit and business. Poe refused to become a businessman. He wanted to be a writer because he admired the British poet Lord Byron. This led to many conflicts. But still, he stood his ground and did not listen to his foster-father. It did not take long and by the age of thirteen Poe had enough material to publish his first book, however, he was asked not to. <sup>[8]</sup> <sup>[9]</sup>

### 2.2 Education and military service

Poe had to leave Richmond in 1826 to be able to study literature at the University of Virginia. His foster-father disagreed with him and gave his foster-son less than a third of the money needed for the studies. With not enough finances to cover his tuition fees Poe gave over to gambling

and drinking. He wanted to win money in order to pay for his expenses but it only got him in deeper debt. <sup>[10]</sup><sup>[11]</sup>

In a very bad condition and with no finances, Poe returned to Richmond only to find out that in his absence his fiancée Elmira Royster had become engaged to someone else. <sup>[12]</sup> Poe still stayed a few months with the Allans, but after an argument with his foster-father he just stormed out of the Allan's mansion to become the writer he had wanted to be long time before. He moved to Boston. <sup>[13]</sup><sup>[14]</sup>

He fulfilled one of his objectives not long after by publishing his first real book "Tamerlane and Other Poems", a collection of poetry, in 1827. <sup>[15]</sup> He was only eighteen years old by that time. He arranged the publication of his book, although it was issued under an anonymous name and the author was listed as "A Bostonian". <sup>[16]</sup>

Poe's wild and adventurous nature also brought him to the United States Army. Secondly, he was broke and actually unemployable. He had to use a false name "Edgar A. Perry" for he was only eighteen years old. <sup>[17]</sup> It was not for the first time he used a different name; before joining the army and due to his debts while working as a newspaper writer he started using a pseudonym "Henri Le Renet". <sup>[18]</sup><sup>[19]</sup>

He was successful in the army. He was promoted to sergeant major for artillery and his pay doubled. Even though he excelled after two years Poe badly wanted out. He searched for help by Lieutenant Howard because an early discharge was hard to obtain. Howard took pity on Poe and agreed on one condition; he had to write to his foster-father and reconcile with him. <sup>[20]</sup> All of the letters went usually unanswered, but when Frances Allan got sick with tuberculosis and died in February 1829, Allan became more sympathetic to his foster-son; he decided to help him so that he was able to go to the United States Military Academy at West Point. <sup>[21]</sup><sup>[22]</sup>

At the Academy he did very well, he was brilliant at mathematics and language, in the meantime he wrote a few poems. Poe was taken aback when he found out that his foster-father Allan had remarried without even

having told him about it. Later in 1830 Poe received a letter from Allan which said he no longer wanted to communicate with his foster-son because he only asked for money. Poe wrote to Allan another letter. He threatened with getting himself expelled from the university. When Allan did not respond to it he did what he had promised. He got himself expelled.<sup>[23]</sup> Almost right away he left he found out his brother had died of tuberculosis. Encouraged with a vision of a better life Poe fled to Baltimore and searched for the rest of his family. Fortunately, his aunt Maria Clemm welcomed him into her home. She had a daughter Virginia who later found liking for Poe. In 1831 Poe also published a book which was called "Poems".<sup>[24]</sup><sup>[25]</sup>

### **2.3 Poe's real beginning of writing**

Poe was still in Baltimore when Allan died omitting Poe from his last will completely. In 1835 Poe was hired to work as an editor of the Southern Literary Messenger.<sup>[26]</sup> It took a year and with Poe's amazing stories and reviews the magazine was the most popular one in the south. It was where Poe earned respect as a critic.<sup>[27]</sup>

By that time he fell in love with his thirteen-year-old cousin. He argued his aunt into giving him permission to marry her daughter and at the age of 27 he married his cousin Virginia who was not yet even fourteen years old. Poe celebrated his marriage in his poem "Eulalie".<sup>[28]</sup><sup>[29]</sup>

For the first time Poe moved to New York in 1837. He found this city the best place for publishing and moreover his pay in Baltimore was too low to live on.<sup>[30]</sup> A year after he had moved with his new family to Philadelphia, he still considered coming back to New York again. In Philadelphia he wrote for a couple of magazines; for example for "Burton's" and "Graham's magazine" while selling articles to others journals. Even though he was becoming more famous he still had problems to earn money to live off. In order to change the magazine industry he wanted to start his own journal – unfortunately, he had not enough money to make it come true.<sup>[31]</sup><sup>[32]</sup><sup>[33]</sup>

In 1841 Poe issued "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", the collection of detective fiction stories and he created a new genre. However, in 1842 his wife was diagnosed tuberculosis. Poe started to drink more than before. In 1844 he also decided to leave "Graham's" and move to New York. He started to work in the "New York Evening Mirror" magazine. <sup>[34]</sup> <sup>[35]</sup> He caught the attention of the readers by serving them his delusion. He simply tricked the public by publishing "The Balloon-hoax"; a story about a man who crossed Atlantic in a balloon. It had never really happened but the readers believed it and they were totally amazed by this "true fabulous story". Until Poe admitted having fooled them all. <sup>[36]</sup>

The big success came in 1845 when he published his poem "The Raven". <sup>[37]</sup> It may be considered his most famous work ever. By that time he was acknowledged and famous enough to earn more money. He published another two books in the same year, he even bought out the "Broadway journal". In 1846 Poe left the city with his sick wife because her condition had gotten worse. They started to live in a cottage. In 1847 Poe's wife Virginia died. Poe was not capable of writing anything for months. His health was poor from constant drinking. He only gave lectures and wanted to find supporters for his magazine project "The Stylus". He spent most of the time travelling from one city to another. <sup>[38]</sup> <sup>[39]</sup>

## 2.4 Last years and death

On one of his lectures he met Nancy Richmond and he platonically fell in love with her. She was married and Poe might have known she would never marry him. However, she inspired him and he was able to write some of his poetry, for example "For Annie". In the 1848 he proposed Sarah Helen Whitman. She agreed but only on one condition; Poe had to stop drinking. He did not quit so she called it off. He then found his first love in Richmond who was by that time a widow and proposed her. She accepted. <sup>[40]</sup> <sup>[41]</sup>

On 28 September 1849 Poe arrived in Baltimore on his way to Philadelphia and he disappeared for five days. On 3 October Poe was finally

found; he was wearing strange clothes which did not belong to him and he was delirious. <sup>[42]</sup> He was hospitalized but was never conscious enough to tell what had happened. The theories differed; he was attacked and robbed by a political gang, others suggest for brain tumor, tuberculosis, epilepsy, even heart-attack to be a possibility. Edgar Allan Poe perished on 7 October 1849. The exact cause of his death has not yet been solved. <sup>[43] [44] [45]</sup>

### **3. Writing career**

#### **3.1 The most famous works**

Even though Edgar Allan Poe was primarily a short story writer and a poet, he was also but also an editor and a critic. His most famous works are mainly short stories and poems, but even some of his magazine articles were successful. <sup>[46]</sup>

##### **3.1.1 Poetry**

Poe's best known poem is without any doubt "The Raven" which was published in January 1845. Poe himself said he had written this poem "only to find out how far into absurdity he can go without crossing a dividing line". <sup>[47]</sup> The Raven was translated into a number of European languages. The first well known interpretation belongs to Charles Baudelaire who also translated all of his stories. Many other poets tried to translate or even poeticize this work. The Czech translations are also worth mentioning. <sup>[48] [49]</sup>

The poem is an example of modern poetry. It tells the story about a man who talks to a raven and he slowly goes mad and cannot differentiate between reality and a dream. This ballad has very interesting logic and composition. It is not rich in words, because Poe did not use more than 1800 words in all of his poems. But it is special because of the sound aspect. Especially thanks to the repetition of the word "Nevermore". <sup>[50]</sup>

The Raven can be considered Poe's greatest work ever. Any other poem was never so famous and many of them even cannot be classified as great

poems. However, in his writing beginnings, in 1827, Poe published a collection of poems "Tamerlane and Other Poems" and in his later years he issued a bridal poem "Eulalie". This poem was later admired by the symbolists thanks to the element of indefiniteness. <sup>[51] [52]</sup>

Poe also wrote three very important essays in which he defined principles of creating a poem. It was "The Poetic Principle", "The Rational of Verse" and "The Philosophy of Composition." <sup>[53]</sup>

### 3.1.2 Tales

Poe wrote about 80 tales. Although, he wanted to be a poet he became more likely a prose writer. His stories can be divided into at least two categories - horror-fiction stories and detective stories. However, because of Poe's indulgence in playing with the reader and the reality, some tales can fit into both categories. <sup>[54] [55] [56]</sup>

The most famous horror stories are "The Fall of the House of Usher", published in 1839, "A Descent into the Maelström", published in 1841 and "The Pit and the Pendulum", published in 1842. Further, there are also "The Masque of the Red Death", "The Oval Portrait" and "The Black Cat". <sup>[57]</sup>

Poe's best known detective story is "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" which was released in 1841. This story is considered to be the first detective fiction ever written. Poe himself called it one of his "tales of ratiocination". He combined mathematic and logic elements to solve mysteries and inexplicable coincidence. The story first appeared in *Graham's Magazine*. Other stories are for example "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt", published in 1842. Then also "The Purloined Letter" and "The Gold-Bug". <sup>[58] [59]</sup>

There are couple of stories which are difficult to be sorted. The reason for that is mainly the fact that he mixes both genres in only one story. It is mainly caused by mixing both of the genres in only one story. So, the reader can find horror features together with features typical for detective fiction in a single story. One of such stories is a psychological story

"The Tell-Tale Heart", published in 1843. The second one is a story about burying while still alive. It is called "The Premature Burial" and it was published in 1844. <sup>[60]</sup> <sup>[61]</sup>

### 3.1.3 Hoaxes

Poe performed, while publishing for different magazines, six hoaxes. A hoax is something intended to trick someone. In Poe's case, when we talk about a hoax we mean an article or simply a written fact which is completely made up, just to fool the society. <sup>[62]</sup> <sup>[63]</sup>

The best known is "The Great Balloon Hoax" or "The Balloon-hoax", published in New York in 1844. A story about a man who crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 75 hours, earned Poe attention and money. <sup>[64]</sup>

## 3.2 Style of writing

Edgar Allan Poe is considered to be not only the father of the detective fiction genre, but he was one of the founders of modern literature and horror genre as well.

There are several typical features for Poe. In his poems, even in his horror stories, he keeps repeating elements such as premature burial, catatonia, a particular type of schizophrenia, mysterious beautiful women and dark nights. His common motives are love, death, fear and adventure, which was typical for romantic writers. His heroes are physically not stable, sometimes even fragile men who crossed the edge of sanity or who are trying to escape. His main character is mostly a man. <sup>[65]</sup>

In his stories, Poe went from the end to the beginning. He defined the final effect and then he constructed the plot. Thanks to this method he became the very first American critic. He rated the general effect of a story and the purpose. Poe even dared to criticize Charles Dickens for his absence of technical construction. Poe's building technique also led him from macabre stories to the perfect crime in detective stories.



The circumstances of his life had greater impact on Poe himself than other writers who inspired him. Although, there is apparent influence of romantic period in his works, Poe's stories are mainly dark, gothic, grim and ghastly. By using those features he created so called "macabre genre", a specific type of horror. <sup>[66]</sup>

Poe uses simplicity to earn reader's attention. His language is simple, clear and reasonable. His vocabulary is limited on purpose. He does not use complicated sentences or phrases. <sup>[67]</sup> Instead, he plays with the reader, with the reality and a dream within a dream. Sometimes, Poe pictures himself as a detective and brings all the information, which is hidden behind a veil, to the reader, and sometimes, he just lets the reader to try to find out the truth on his or her own. Poe was also very fond of paradoxes and grotesque. <sup>[68]</sup>

In a couple of Poe's stories the line between reality and an illusion is so close that both of them blend together and the reader is about to choose himself. His stories are usually either scary and irrational or analytic and rational. But he never fails in using such elements to draw the attention.

## 4. Detective stories

Detective stories or detective fiction is a type of popular literature. It is considered to be a sub-genre of mystery fiction. A detective or a laic investigator is supposed to investigate a crime, usually a murder, and find the perpetrator. His or her task is to reveal and put together the sequence and order of events which led to the crime. This genre has its typical elements, such as a seemingly perfect crime, wrongly accused person, a detective who notices something that no one else did before, the sudden twist at the end of the story and many others. The manipulation with evidence and a villain pretending to help the detective with investigation is also a common attribute. [69]

Edgar Allan Poe was the author of the first detective story. That is why he is called “the father of the detective fiction genre” or “the founder of detective fiction”. “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” was published in April 1841. It was followed by “The Mystery of Marie Roget” and “The Purloined Letter” both published in 1845. [70] [71]

An author of a detective story has to create a precise construction of a crime, an order of events and the actions of a murderer. Only then is the author able to create a good plot. Poe’s detective stories are very specific. He applies and uses deduction and analysis to detect crimes and to solve them. He also combines logic and mathematics. Only with his five stories, he laid the foundation of the detective fiction genre. [72] [73]

Many other writers were fascinated by this genre. The most famous one was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, a British doctor who changed the form of detective fiction. His arrogant, weird, but amusing detective, Sherlock Holmes, drew the attention of many people who liked his awkwardness and ability to solve cases by using logical reasoning. Holmes’ first appearance was in the novel “A Study in Scarlet” published in 1887, in an annual journal. The character of Holmes was created according to the character of Doyle’s professor, although he had been inspired by Poe’s C. Auguste Dupin as well. Sherlock

Holmes appeared in four novels and 56 other stories. However, Doyle created a companion for Holmes. His companion, Dr. John H. Watson, helped Holmes to solve cases and was taking care of Holmes' state of health. <sup>[74]</sup>

This genre started to become more and more popular among people. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was published a large number of detective stories. For example, "The Innocence of Father Brown", written by Gilbert Keith Chesterton or "The Circular Staircase", written by Mary Roberts Rinehart.

Further, the 1930s can be labeled as the golden age of detective fiction. The majority of the writers were British or American. One of them was also Agatha Christie who interested people with her fictional detective Hercule Poirot, first introduced in "The Mysterious Affair at Styles", published in 1920. Further, it was for example, Dashiell Hammett or Dorothy Leigh Sayers. <sup>[75] [76]</sup>

#### **4.1 Detective Dupin**

As it was already mentioned before, Poe gave literary world the first detective character, represented by Le Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin. He is a fictional eccentric detective who made his first appearance in the story "Murders in the Rue Morgue". He was inspired by François-Eugène Vidocq, an existent French adventurer and detective <sup>[77]</sup>. The character of Dupin is also the only one who has appeared in more than one of Poe's stories.

Dupin is a young man who comes from a wealthy and noble family; however, a series of unlucky events led him to poverty. He does not long for money and luxury. The only luxury he affords himself is books. He is straightforward, well-educated and has a vivid imagination. He uses his abilities and skills to reconstruct crimes. Dupin is not a professional detective, but he uses his intelligence, imagination and analytical skills to gather the evidence and to draw a conclusion. He also likes analyzing people and revealing their secrets. Most importantly, he seems to take pleasure in it. He manipulates people, influencing their thoughts. He likes being admired for his high intelligence. He also finds liking in listening to himself talk, or explain

things to other people. Actually, Dupin starts the investigation of the first murder for his own amusement, and because it is a real challenge for him. <sup>[78]</sup> <sup>[79]</sup>

He likes working at night by the candlelight. The night improves his fantasy. Dupin does not believe in supernatural events; everything can be rationally explained. He has no problem with acknowledging his mistake but does not want to talk about it. He can be also kind-hearted and fair. He knows when to do the right thing and say the right words. He can give very good and persuasive speeches. <sup>[80]</sup>

However, he stays interested only if he feels challenge in something. When he solves a case, he completely forgets about it and does not care anymore. He is a stoic and his acts are purely logical. He is also a demagogue; he plays with words, creates complicate sentences to mess with the reader. <sup>[81]</sup> <sup>[82]</sup>

## **4.2 Murders in the Rue Morgue**

The main character of the story is Le Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, an unprofessional detective, and his companion, who is not named. His identity stays also unknown to the reader. Dupin is supposed to solve a mysterious murder of two women. The storyline is set in a non-existent street in Paris, France. <sup>[83]</sup>

### **4.2.1 Plot summary**

The introduction to this story is quite an unusual one. He deals with features called analytical skills. Instead of a proper introduction, Poe mentions several remarks to the reader; he describes his own thoughts. He explains his thoughts on intellectual games. He points out not to mistake simple ingenuity for calculating power. At the end, Poe clarifies that the following story may actually seem as an animated commentary to his already stated opinions.

The story takes place in Paris. The narrator recounts how he got himself acquainted with Monsieur Dupin. He also explains the reason why they started living together, isolated from society, in an aged and gloomy mansion, situated in a deserted part of the Faubourg St. Germain. The narrator openly admits that he admires Dupin and he even finds liking for his bizarre habits. He uses one particular example to show Dupin's intelligence, especially his analytic ability.

One night they walk through Paris, both of them deep in thoughts. Neither of them is saying a word. All of a sudden, Dupin answers an unspoken question about which his companion was thinking. The narrator is impressed when Dupin explains how he was able to read his mind.

Moments later, while they are skimming an evening edition of "Gazette des Tribunaux", an article on mysterious murders draws their attention. Two women were killed in the Rue Morgue, Madame and Mademoiselle L'Espanaye. There are no witnesses who saw the murderer and the door happened to be locked from within. The furniture in the room was smashed. One body was stuck up the chimney and the other was found in the yard. Both bodies were badly mutilated.

The day after, the newspapers bring additional information and several testimonies. Among the witnesses were Pauline Dubourg, laundress; Pierre Moreau, tobacconist; Officer Isidore Muset; Henri Duval, one of the neighbours; Odenheimer, restaurateur; Jules Mignaud, banker; Adolphe Le Bon, clerk; William Bird, English dressmaker; Alfonzo Garcio, undertaker; Alberto Montani, pastry and cake maker and Paul Dumas and Alexandre Etienne, doctor and surgeon. The testimonies differ; however, some features are identical. From what the police know, there was an argument. The witnesses heard two voices. One of the villains was definitely French, but no one was able to identify the second one. The room was locked; the door had to be forced. All windows were sashed. There is no back stairway. No money was stolen, only a bunch of clothes. Madame L'Espanaye was a fortune-teller. She and her daughter had lived separated. No one knows if they had any living relatives. The Police are puzzled.

The evening edition of the newspaper announces that Monsieur Le Bon has been arrested. He testified before that he had accompanied Madame L'Espanaye to her house with four thousand francs. He was arrested, although almost the whole amount of the money had been found.

Dupin shows an apparent interest in solving this mysterious case, because he sees no mystery in it. He gets permission from the Police. Then, he and his companion go and see the crime scene. They search the surroundings and the building from behind. After a while, they finally enter the house where both murders were committed. They continue to the room where the young lady was killed. Dupin scans everything, even the bodies. They also explore the yard and other rooms of the house. For this day, they no longer talk about this topic. They do not talk at all.

On the next day, Dupin states that Police do not do their best in solving this case. The narrator again listens to Dupin's theories. The French genius believes that if he is able to differ the unusual from the incomprehensible, he can find a solution. He has to look at this case from different perspectives. Further, he explains that it is also important to ask right questions. He is expecting a man to show up in their mansion, because he thinks this person must have been involved in the crime. His companion, with no doubt about his friend, does as he says, and they wait with guns to capture this man. While waiting, Dupin continues his theory. The testimonies agree that the gruff voice belonged to a Frenchman, however, when it comes to the second voice, everyone finds it to be foreign. From this he concludes that the voice must have sounded really weird.

He uses his imagination and transports himself to the crime scene. Since he believes no supernatural creature was involved, he tries to think how the perpetrator or perpetrators got away. They knew that there is no secret passage leading out of the house; Dupin confirms it. He excludes the chimneys. The only possibility were windows in the room, where it all happened. Both of them were fastened with sashes. After a little examination Dupin finds out that the window has the power of fastening itself. The mystery is almost clarified. Although he points out that the villain would have to be extremely lithe

and able to jump. He combines this swiftness and the shrill voice which sounded foreign to several foreigners. At this point, the narrator, who silently listens to Dupin, has an idea where his French friend is heading.

Dupin continues. He quickly destroys the presumption that someone killed both women for money, which means Adolphe Le Bon is innocent. He comes back to the mutilated bodies; he still keeps in mind the shrill voice, the peculiar agility and the absence of motive. He comes to a conclusion that it must have been a monster. He even considers the tresses of hair with bulbs which were found at the crime scene. Dupin shows the narrator another tress of hair, this time definitely inhuman, which he found in Madame's hair, and an article about the large fulvous Ourang-Outang. Dupin believes that there were two people, one of them a Frenchman. He presumes that the Frenchman could be innocent, the animal could have escaped. He made a trap; the day before, he published an advertisement, in the section dedicated to mariners. It says that they had caught an Ourang-Outang and the owner is supposed to come to their house. Dupin had found a ribbon with a specific knot on it, only mariners can do, that is why he assumes the Frenchman is a mariner.

He foresees the mariner's behaviour. Suddenly, just as Dupin presumed, they hear somebody coming. Finally, a man appeared; apparently a mariner. He was a native-born Parisian. Dupin makes him to tell them the whole story, promising they will do no harm to him. The mariner explains he had wanted to stop the monkey and he did not kill those women. He tells everything that had happened that night in the Rue Morgue. He confirms Dupin's theory. The story ends when the ape is caught, Le Bon is released. The police do not quite appreciate what Dupin had done for them, but he is pleased with himself. That is all he cares about. <sup>[84]</sup> <sup>[85]</sup>

## 5. Text analysis

### 5.1 Analysis of Murders in the Rue Morgue

This chapter deals with an analysis of particular features which are characteristic for a detective story, while paying attention to the story mentioned in previous chapter - The Murders in the Rue Morgue. However, Poe found liking in mixing genres and never really managed to exclude a horror features from his other stories.

#### 5.1.1 Detective

Poe gave the literary world his first fictional detective. The character of a detective may differ. It can be a real police officer or a very intelligent man, who helps solving the case for his own interest. In most cases, they are highly intelligent, even ingenious, investigative and sometimes bizarre. Dupin is not a police officer. He analyses already known facts. He results from what the Police had found out. However, he doubts their methods and thinks the policemen are lacking a specific insight.

*“The police are confounded by the seeming absence of motive -- not for the murder itself --but for the atrocity of the murder. They are puzzled, too, by the seeming impossibility of reconciling the voices heard in contention, with the facts that no one was discovered up stairs but the assassinated Mademoiselle L'Espanaye, and that there were no means of egress without the notice of the party ascending. The wild disorder of the room; the corpse thrust, with the head downward, up the chimney; the frightful mutilation of the body of the old lady; these considerations with those just mentioned, and others which I need not mention, have sufficed to paralyze the powers, by putting completely at fault the boasted acumen, of the government agents. They have fallen into the gross but common error of confounding the unusual with the abstruse. But it is by these*



*deviations from the plane of the ordinary, that reason feels its way, if at all, in its search for the true.”* <sup>[86]</sup>

### 5.1.2 Murderer

As the opposite of the detective, there is always a perpetrator or perpetrators; a person who committed a crime. Poe gave the world not only the first detective story, but even the first animal murderer. Dupin alone is not absolutely sure, what kind of man could have committed such a brutal deed. He combines all the elements about the villain and comes to an interesting conclusion. <sup>[87]</sup> <sup>[88]</sup>

*"Keeping now steadily in mind the points to which I have drawn your attention --that peculiar voice, that unusual agility, and that startling absence of motive in a murder so singularly atrocious as this --let us glance at the butchery itself. Here is a woman strangled to death by manual strength, and thrust up a chimney, head downward. Ordinary assassins employ no such modes of murder as this. Least of all, do they thus dispose of the murdered. In the manner of thrusting the corpse up the chimney, you will that there was something excessively outre --something altogether irreconcilable with our common notions of human action, even when we suppose the actors the most depraved of men. Think, too, how great must have been that strength which could have thrust the body up such an aperture so forcibly that the united vigor of several persons was found barely sufficient to drag it down!"* <sup>[89]</sup>

### 5.1.3 Seemingly perfect crime

At the beginning of a detective story, there is a murder introduced and it seems almost perfect. The police are puzzled and are failing to find the perpetrator. No one understands how it happened. Some start to believe there might have been something supernatural involved in the crime.

Here comes the intelligent detective who catches sight of something that the Police failed to notice before. With the use of observation, analysis and deduction, he combines all the clues that he collected. The murder then does not seem perfect at all. Dupin also refuses to admit that the murder was caused by a supernatural creature or by some supernatural power. Although, it looks seemingly perfect, he doubts it really is. <sup>[90]</sup> <sup>[91]</sup>

#### **5.1.4 Locked room mystery**

Locked room mystery is a general name for such stories in which a murder happened in a locked room. The crime seems almost perfect and unsolvable. However, Dupin in his case finds that the shutters have the ability of closing themselves. <sup>[92]</sup>

#### **5.1.5 Solving crime**

Almost every detective story ends with solving the murder. It is explained to the reader how it all happened and everything seems clear. The author is supposed to play fair with the reader and show him all the clues so that he could use his own imagination. Poe gives the reader sufficient information so that he or she is able to put them together and create his or her own opinion. However, it is quite unexpected that the murderer is an ape. <sup>[93]</sup>

#### **5.1.6 Falsely accused witness**

A wrongly accused suspect is a very common feature of a detective story. It mostly serves as a misleading agent for the reader. In this story, the wrong suspect is Adolphe Le Bon, a bank clerk, who is arrested by the police after finding out he was the man who had escorted Madame L'Espanaye with a specific amount of money. <sup>[94]</sup> <sup>[95]</sup>

### 5.1.7 Motive

In almost every detective story the murderer has a motive. A motive is basically the reason for killing a person. It can be almost everything. The usual motives are jealousy, revenge, unrequited love or money. However, Poe used an unusual perpetrator in his story; it is an ape. Dupin himself claims that this case is lacking a motive. The ape had none of already mentioned motives, but the reason for those murders was fear and disorientation. The people were chosen by mistake. If any other window was opened, it probably would have attacked somebody else. <sup>[96]</sup> <sup>[97]</sup>

### 5.1.8 Testimonies

To be able to assemble the puzzle, the reader has to be given clues and leads. Testimonies are, however, very important for the investigator as well. It gives looks from different perspectives; from different witnesses. Very often, there is one or more liars among the witnesses, who make the investigation more complicated. In his story, Poe comprehensively describes the testimonies. He introduces many witnesses. There is no liar among them. <sup>[98]</sup> <sup>[99]</sup>

*"Jules Mignaud, banker, of the firm of Mignaud et Fils, Rue Deloraine. Is the elder Mignaud. Madame L'Espanaye had some property. Had opened an account with his baking house in the spring of the year -- (eight years previously). Made frequent deposits in small sums. Had checked for nothing until the third day before her death, when she took out in person the sum of 4000 francs. This sum was paid in gold, and a clerk sent home with the money.*

*"Adolphe Le Bon, clerk to Mignaud et Fils, deposes that on the day in question, about noon, he accompanied Madame L'Espanaye to her residence with the 4000 francs, put up in two bags. Upon the door being opened, Mademoiselle L. appeared and took from his hands one of the bags, while the old lady relieved him of the other. He then bowed and departed. Did not*

*see any person in the street at the time. It is a bye-street --very lonely.*<sup>[100]</sup>

### 5.1.9 Precise construction of a murder

The author of a detective story must construct a murder. It does not matter if the murder was caused by mistake or if it was precisely planned. The author must think about details, because at the end of the story, everything has to be explained, according to the unwritten rule, when the author must play fair with the reader. At the end of *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, Poe gives the reader an exact construction of what had happened.<sup>[101][102]</sup>

*“Returning home from some sailors' frolic on the night, or rather in the morning of the murder, he found the beast occupying his own bed-room, into which it had broken from a closet adjoining, where it had been, as was thought, securely confined. Razor in hand, and fully lathered, it was sitting before a looking-glass, attempting the operation of shaving, in which it had no doubt previously watched its master through the key-hole of the closet. Terrified at the sight of so dangerous a weapon in the possession of an animal so ferocious, and so well able to use it, the man, for some moments, was at a loss what to do. He had been accustomed, however, to quiet the creature, even in its fiercest moods, by the use of a whip, and to this he now resorted. Upon sight of it, the Ourang-Outang sprang at once through the door of the chamber, down the stairs, and thence, through a window, unfortunately open, into the street.*

*The Frenchman followed in despair; the ape, razor still in hand, occasionally stopping to look back and gesticulate at its pursuer, until the latter had nearly come up with it. It then again made off. In this manner the chase continued for a long time. The streets were profoundly quiet, as it was nearly three o'clock in the morning. In passing down an alley in the rear of the Rue*

*Morgue, the fugitive's attention was arrested by a light gleaming from the open window of Madame L'Esplanade's chamber, in the fourth story of her house. Rushing to the building, it perceived the lightning-rod, clambered up with inconceivable agility, grasped the shutter, which was thrown fully back against the wall, and, by its means, swung itself directly upon the headboard of the bed. The whole feat did not occupy a minute. The shutter was kicked open again by the Ourang-Outang as it entered the room."*<sup>[103]</sup>

#### **5.1.10 Companion**

Usually, there is a friend of the main character. He or she observe the behaviour of the detective and helps him solve the case. This help sometimes consists of commenting and agreeing with the detective. Poe's ally, the unknown narrator, actually tells a story of a very intelligent man who he had met when he had been spending time in Paris. It can be considered to be an outer (external) description of Dupin; he described his behaviour in an example situation.<sup>[104]</sup>

#### **5.1.11 Horror**

In a detective story, there can be used some element so that the whole story would have the eye-catching effect for the reader. Poe adds some elements of a horror story into this detective story. The style of murders was rather disgusting and Poe described almost every detail to the reader. Both bodies were horribly mutilated. One body was thrust up the chimney; it was bloody and bruised. The second one had a slit throat; the head fell off when the Policemen tried to lift it. There were also tresses of hair with bulbs, which shows an evidence of a fight.<sup>[105]</sup>

*"After a thorough investigation of every portion of the house, without farther discovery, the party made its way into a small paved yard in the rear of the building, where lay the corpse*

*of the old lady, with her throat so entirely cut that, upon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off. The body, as well as the head, was fearfully mutilated --the former so much so as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity.* <sup>[106]</sup>

#### **5.1.12 Mystery**

The story might be considered to be a mystery one. Detective Dupin and the reader solve the case together, combining clues and excluding theories. The whole story seems like a puzzle which is at the end brought together. The murder itself is at the beginning of the story considered to be a mystery. <sup>[107] [108]</sup>

#### **5.1.13 Direct speech**

The direct speech is not a significant element for detective stories, but in this story, Poe gave it a rapid succession. The whole story is almost Dupin's monologue. The narrator occasionally comments on something. <sup>[109] [110]</sup>

#### **5.1.14 Short sentences**

Short sentences are used to highlight the genre and to raise the tension. It draws the attention of the reader more than complex sentences. Poe used limited vocabulary and short sentences to give his stories their potential. <sup>[111] [112]</sup>

### **5.2 Commentary**

Murders in the Rue Morgue is a very good detective story. It shows many elements which create a detective story. In his life, Poe wrote many horror stories so we could have expected that he would omit it from his detective works. Generally, we can say it did no harm to the story.

When we take the character of detective Dupin, we can see many similarities to Edgar Allan Poe, such as high intelligence; mathematical and analytical skills; sharp criticism; sarcasm, observing and many others.

Poe also used his method of revealing the whole series of events to the reader and explained everything that is one of his two styles. The other style consists of hiding facts and letting the reader wonder what had really happened.

The whole story is sophisticated. The murderer is not known, and actually it is hard to believe how it all happened. The detective stories may have changed through years but Poe's work gives this genre its roots.

## 6. Analysis of Poe's other detective stories

This chapter presents Poe's two other detective stories. In the first part of this chapter, there are briefly described their plot summaries and the second part is dedicated to comparing all three stories. It points out their joint detective features and similarity.

### 6.1. Plot summary

#### 6.1.1 The Mystery of Marie Rogêt

The story takes place in Paris, France. The narrator gives a speech before things start to move and the murder appear. A young lady, Marie Rogêt, had been killed and found in the Seine River, and yet again the Parisian Police is clueless. The Police prefect asks for help and that is the reason for Dupin to get involved.

The narrator reads several newspaper articles to give the reader a proper outlook, before Dupin starts to investigate. He also points at the inability of the Police deputies to solve this case on their own. He finds many interesting clues and tries step by step to solve the mystery murder. However, at the end of the story, the murderer stays unknown and the mystery remains unexplained. Dupin's bizarre methods and techniques were cut off before the murderer was convicted, due to the magazine *Snowden's Lady's Companion*, where it was published.

An interesting thing about this story is that it was written by the case of Mary Cecilia Rogers who was murdered in New York. Poe used newspaper articles to bring all the evidence together and wrote the story. <sup>[113]</sup><sup>[114]</sup>

#### 6.1.2 The Purloined Letter

The story begins on one stormy evening when the narrator and Dupin are smoking pipes in a complete silence and thinking. Unexpectedly, there comes



the Police prefect, simply called G., for a visit. He needs Dupin's advice. Dupin sees the challenge and listens.

A few months ago, there had been a letter stolen from a royal lady. The thief is known, it is a Minister D., but the letter has not been found yet. It is a matter of a great importance and everything is secret, claims the head of the Parisian Police. He further tells how he has been searching Minister's house, but still no letter. Dupin advises him to search the house again.

About a month later, G. comes back. He is desperate and claims that he will give 50,000 franc to anyone who gives him the letter back. Dupin says that G. has his letter back if he gives him the promised amount of money.

At the end Dupin explains, how he got the letter and that he wanted to revenge to Minister D. for something he had done to him in the past. <sup>[115]</sup> <sup>[116]</sup>

## 6.2 Analysis

In all three stories, there are specific elements or features which are typical for Poe and his detective stories. He even keeps repeating some situations, people and characters. Although Poe's stories "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*" and "*The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*" are more similar. "*The Purloined Letter*" differs in some features from those two.

### 6.2.1 Inability of the Police

The Parisian Police is very good and efficient, but in some cases they fail to solve crimes because they do not differentiate groups from an intelligent individual. The problem is they use only one technique. He also claims that the Police are limited.

Even though Dupin says what he thinks about the Police, he does not say they are stupid or insufficient. He does not abandon them; he just thinks that he can see something that they are not able to pick up. <sup>[117]</sup> <sup>[118]</sup> <sup>[119]</sup>

### 6.2.2 Dupin's monologue

It was already mentioned that Dupin is a very good speaker. In fact, the stories are based on Dupin's explanations. He solves the crime and explains how his train of thoughts. Dupin often uses complicated sentences which are hard to understand. There comes the narrator, who stays most of the time silent, and explains everything again, but simply. This explanation is not targeted to the reader, but sounds more likely to assure the narrator about his thoughts. Poe obviously did not want to accuse the reader of not being educated or intelligent enough.

However, in the "*Purloined Letter*", the conversation is not a dialogue. The Prefect, so called G., is invited in the home of Dupin and his companion, and they have a conversation. <sup>[120]</sup> <sup>[121]</sup> <sup>[122]</sup>

### 6.2.3 Evidence

When solving the crime, there must be some clues which will lead the detective to a solution. In the first story, "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*", the evidence and clues were based on testimonies. There were several people who testified and Dupin used it for solving the murder and confronting the murderer. In the second story, "*The Mystery of Marie Rog  t*", Dupin uses newspaper and magazine articles to solve the puzzle. In the "*Purloined Letter*" the Police Prefect himself gives Dupin and his companion a testimony because this crime is supposed to be a secret. <sup>[123]</sup> <sup>[124]</sup> <sup>[125]</sup>

### 6.2.4 Trick and cleverness

In all cases, Dupin uses his skills to catch the perpetrator by a trick. In the first story, Dupin publishes a fake newspaper article to catch the perpetrator. In the last story, the reader can also see the whole process. Dupin steals the already stolen letter; he changes it for a copy. In the second story, the accusatory part is missing and the murderer stays unknown to the reader. <sup>[126]</sup> <sup>[127]</sup> <sup>[128]</sup>

### 6.2.5 Beginning

All three stories begin unexpectedly and have a short introduction before things start to move. They all take place at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Paris, France. <sup>[129] [130] [131]</sup>

### 6.2.6 Solving a crime

This is one of such features in which the stories differ. While in the first and second story Dupin's goal is to find the perpetrator, in the third story the name of the perpetrator is already known. It may be caused by the fact, that first two stories are murders and the last one is a theft.

However, Poe's method is very effective. The reader can look back on the evidence presented in the story and solve the crime himself. That makes those stories interesting. <sup>[132] [133] [134]</sup>

### 6.2.7 Games

In all three stories there is always mentioned a game. There are mentioned several games in the introduction to the first story: chess; checkers and whist. In the closure to the second story, there is mentioned a game dice. And finally, when Dupin leads one of his monologues, he mentions a game called "odd and even". He also describes a game when the players guess a place in a map. He uses those games to point out the intelligence and abilities the players must have and compares it to the perpetrators. <sup>[135] [136] [137]</sup>

### 6.2.8 Detailed description

Poe has a sense for detail. He knows how to describe an action, but still he has the ability to keep the reader on the alert. In every story, Poe does not forget to give a detailed description of a crime and its solution; for some reason, he does not pay much attention to the looks and description of his characters. The only person and character which he described was the one and only detective Dupin. <sup>[138] [139] [140]</sup>

### 6.2.9 Sudden twist

At first sight, Poe wants to create an illusion of an unsolvable matter. Then, there comes detective Dupin and gives his theory. Suddenly, the crime starts to look simple. <sup>[141]</sup> <sup>[142]</sup> <sup>[143]</sup>

### 6.3 Commentary

All three stories are readable and catchy. Poe creates a specific pattern, for his detective stories, and he follows it. Although it is still exact and does the trick, Dupin's method in solving crimes also remains unchanged. The method is called "ratiocination". <sup>[144]</sup>

Even in "*The Mystery of Marie Rogêt*" and "The Purloined Letter", there are evident signs of horror or mystery which only points to the fact that Poe was a great horror writer. A little bit of mystery is also hidden in the character of the narrator who was never introduced.

Poe created a scope of a detective story and tried to follow it. The stories differ, but it cannot be denied that they have common features and situations. In the last story, Dupin almost laughs at mathematicians and their limited point of view. He says that a mathematician must be a poet to have the proper insight. In only confirms the theory that Poe saw himself in the character of Dupin, because he was not only a poet but also a mathematician.

## 7. Conclusion

The Bachelor's thesis is a study and analysis of Edgar Allan Poe and his influence on the detective fiction and its following development. It deals with analysing of his detective works and compares his three stories: "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*", "*The Mystery of Marie Rôget*" and "*The Purloined Letter*". The thesis could be further used as a basis for analysing Poe's style of writing and further extended. It could also serve as one of fundamentals for further description of detective fiction.

The thesis introduces the life of Edgar Allan Poe, shows some of his literary and personal achievements and the greatest works. It presents Poe as a poet, a journalist, but mainly as a writer of three detective stories and as the founder of the detective fiction. It also describes Poe's style of writing and his repeating elements which are expected to be found in his detective novels.

The thesis describes Poe's fictional detective Dupin. He was expected to be example case of an unprofessional, highly intelligent detective. The behaviour of Dupin and his character confirmed the presumption. It also showed many joint characteristics which Dupin and Poe aspired.

Further, there is a summary of Poe's first detective story, "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*", where Dupin was firstly introduced. It was expected that this story set the basic elements for a detective story and it was confirmed in the analysis. The analysis of the story defined the elements of a detective story. There are pasted several parts of Poe's story which proved the hypothesis. It was found out that there were also used the elements of horror and mystery. It was proved that Poe indeed combined the elements of all three genres and created a detective story. However, the detective elements in the story outweigh the others.

It was also expected to find repeating actions and often used features in Poe's three stories. With no doubt, there are some features which the author keeps repeating. However, after careful reading there were many interesting features found than presumed. Some of them were revealed after a closer look.

Those joint features are specified and described in chapter 6.2 of this thesis. It is proved that the previous hypothesis was true.

As fundamental sources for this thesis were used all three detective stories, written in English, and the book “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, written in Czech. It was necessary to use the original stories, for the work is written in English. However, for better understanding, it is better to work with both versions.

There are also appendices attached to the thesis. They contain pictures of Poe and his home, an extended summary of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and also Poe’s original work written in English.

The work with English written texts was interesting and contributing. It would be interesting to extend this work and compare Poe to the other authors of detective stories, or even compare detective Dupin to other famous detectives.

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## 10. Abstract

The Bachelor's thesis is aimed at Edgar Allan Poe and his detective stories in which he set the basic elements for a detective fiction. The theoretical part comprises Poe's biography and greatest works, description of the detective fiction genre, description of Poe's fictional detective C. Auguste Dupin and a summary of his detective story "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*". The story is further analysed and commented on in the practical part. This part also contains a comparison of all Poe's detective stories and points at joint features.

The most significant works used for the practical part are the detective story "*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*", "*The Mystery of Marie Rôgel*" and "*The Purloined Letter*". The main objective of this thesis is to find features in Poe's stories and prove it is detective fiction, and also compare those stories with each other and find their joint features. According to the analysis, the stories are detective fiction with the element of horror and mystery.

## 11. Resumé

Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na Edgara Allana Poea a jeho detektivní tvorbu, v níž stanovil základní prvky detektivní fikce. Teoretická část obsahuje Poeův životopis a nejznámější díla, popis detektivního žánru, popis Poeova fiktivního detektiva C. Augusta Dupina a obsah detektivní povídky „*Vraždy v ulicích Morgue*“. Příběh je dále rozebrán, analyzován a okomentován v praktické části. Tato část také obsahuje srovnání všech Poeových detektivních povídek a poukazuje na jejich společné znaky.

Nejvýznačnějšími díly, která byla použita v praktické části, jsou „*Vraždy v ulici Morgue*“, „*Záhada Marie Rôgetové*“ a „*Odcizený dopis*“. Hlavním cílem této práce je najít znaky detektivní fikce v Poeových povídkách a dokázat, že povídky jsou detektivní a dále srovnat tyto povídky a najít jejich společné znaky. Dle analýzy jsou povídky detektivní, s příměsí hororu a záhad.

## 12. Appendices

Appendix I:           The Murders in the Rue Morgue – long summary

Appendix II:          Pictures

Appendix III:         A Passage from the original Text: *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*

## **Appendix I**

### **The Murders in the Rue Morgue – long summary**

Extracted from the original story, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, written  
by Edgar Allan Poe

In his introduction to the story, Poe mentions several mental features which are called analytical skill. Instead of an introduction, the author gives the reader a number of remarks which spontaneously occur to him. He compares playing chess and checkers. He declares that a chess-player only needs to focus because there are many possible moves; every piece is able to move differently. However, when playing checkers the player has a limited choice of moves. That makes the game, according to Poe, intellectually more difficult. He also mentions whist, a card game which has been played in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, and which he likes because of its influence upon so called calculating power. He wonders if a chess-player could be a good whist-player. He says that theoretically, the player only needs to have a brilliant memory, to focus and last but not least he must know the rules. Then, he has everything necessary for the game. However, here the analytical player can show his skills. He can make remarks for himself and draw a conclusion. He further names some pieces of advice which a whist-player should notice.

Poe also alerts not to mistake simple ingenuity for analytical skills (analytical power). An analyst uses ingenuity, but an ingenious person is often not capable of creating an analysis. He plays with words and creates a labyrinth that is hard to understand. At the end, Poe explains that the following story may actually seem as an animated commentary to his already stated opinions.

At the beginning of the story, the narrator describes how he got himself acquainted with Monsieur Dupin. It happens at a hidden library in the Rue Montmartre. They are both searching for the same rare, but very interesting volume. A coincidence brings them together. The narrator is fascinated

by the French gentleman and pleased with his presence. He captivates him with the vast extent of his reading and being highly educated. The narrator suddenly finds what he had been searching for. He treasures the presence of such a man beyond price. He frankly admits this to Dupin.

They agree on living together during narrator's stay in Paris. Because Dupin's financial situation is rather oppressive, the narrator is permitted to rent and furnish an aged and dreary mansion. The mansion has been abandoned for a long time through some superstition, but neither of them wants to know the reason. It is located in a deserted part of the Faubourg St. Germain. Both men keep the location a secret and do not accept any guests. They start to live in this abandoned, grotesque place all for themselves, only with their thoughts.

The narrator notices that he is influenced by his friend and clings to him. He starts to accept every strange habit and makes it his own. He embraces the extravagancy and eccentricity his friend has. One of such whims was Dupin's special liking for night. Therefore, when the first sunlight comes, Dupin and his companion close all the shutters and light up two candles. Then by the candle light they debate or write until the real darkness comes. In the night they wander through the city and continue the conversation they started.

These conversations make the narrator wonder. Dupin's analytic ability is unbelievable. He knows that and he eagerly exercises it with pleasure. He also prides himself on being able to read in other people's minds. In those moments, the narrator comments that Dupin is cold, absent-minded and his voice turns into a squeaky one. This leads the narrator to an amusing imagination of two Dupins - the creative one and the resolving one. He uses an example to show Dupin's real intelligence and especially the character of his remarks.

The situation takes place at one particular night. The narrator and Dupin are wandering and thinking, neither of them saying a word. But all of a sudden, Dupin answers a question which was not asked, but it fits perfectly in the narrator's thinking. His companion is more than impressed and wants

to know which method he used to read his mind. Ravished with delight, Dupin explains the flow of narrator's mind and the reason why he answered the unspoken question.

Not long after that, they skim an evening edition of "Gazette des Tribunaux" and an article on mysterious murders draws their attention. It happened on the fourth floor of a particular house in the Rue Morgue. Two women were killed, Madame L'Espanaye, and her daughter, Mademoiselle L'Espanaye. The neighbours heard somebody scream. When the screaming ceased, they were able to detect two or three voices. The door was locked from the inside and the furniture was smashed. There was only a bloody cut-throat razor and a couple of long grey tresses of human hair, also covered in blood. Madame L'Espanaye was still missing while the body of her daughter was discovered; it was found head downward in the chimney. Then the body of Madame L'Espanaye was found dead with a cut throat in the yard. It was badly mutilated.

The day after, the newspaper brings additional details. Many people were interrogated, but nothing has clarified the situation, yet. The newspaper also shows an abstract of those testimonies. Their laundress, Pauline Dubourg, claims that she has known both women for three years, and the mother had a good relationship with her daughter. She says that the old lady had made a living as a fortune-teller. They had no servant, she adds.

Pierre Moreau, tobacconist, says that he has been selling stuff to Madame L'Espanaye for almost four years. The late woman and her daughter had lived in the house for more than six years. It belonged to the older lady who was supposedly childish. The daughter had been seen in those six years five or six times; both women lived apart. He claims that it was no secret among neighbors that Madame L'Espanaye told fortune; he does not believe in such things. He had only seen a doctor or a messenger entering the house.

Further, the newspaper writes that no one was able to say if Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter had any living relatives. The windows were rarely opened. The state of the house was good.

The officer Muset testifies that he was called to the house some time around three o'clock in the morning. There were about thirty people who wanted to get in. He was the one who opened the gate with a bayonet. When he did so, the screaming ceased. Someone yelled in agony, the screams were loud and piercing. He says that two voices were speaking; one of them was gruff and the second was high-pitched and very strange. He knows certainly that the first voice did not belong to a woman; it could have been some Frenchman. The shrieky voice sounded foreign; it was hard to understand.

Henri Duval, a neighbour, claims to be one of those who entered the room as the first. He roughly agrees with the testimony of Officer Muset. Further he says that they closed the gate after they had entered in. The strange voice could belong to an Italian, he presumes, but he is not sure if it was a male voice; he cannot speak Italian. He knew both women, and he is sure that whoever was screaming, it was neither of them.

Odenheimer, restaurateur, comes to testify voluntarily. He cannot speak French; he testified in the presence of an interpreter. He tells that as he was passing by, he heard the yelling. It took a couple of minutes; it was piercing. He was also one of those who entered the house. He agreed with the testimony of the others with one exception. He is sure that the shrieky voice belonged to a man, respectively a Frenchman. He thinks that the voice was rather harsh, not shrill or shrieky. He says that the gruff voice repeated words "sacré" and "diable". There was "mon Dieu" once mentioned.

A banker, Jules Mignaud confirms that Madame L'Espanaye had some money. She opened an account eight years ago. Very often she made deposits; just small amounts of money. She had never withdrawn money, but three days before her death she had asked for four thousand francs. The sum was paid in gold. An employee was sent with the money to deliver it to the house. The employee from the company says that he accompanied Madame



to her home. He was carrying four thousand francs in his hands; it was placed in two sacks. The older lady took one of the sacks and her daughter took the second one. He left. He is sure that there was no one to be seen in the street; it is no main street.

William Bird, an English dressmaker, testifies that he entered the house with the others. He has been living in France for two years. He heard the argument and somebody fighting. He does not remember everything but the gruff voice spoke French. He recognised two words: “sacré” and “mon Dieu”. According to his opinion, the shrill voice was sharp. He is convinced it was no Englishman. It could have been a German. He cannot exclude that the voice was female; he cannot speak German language.

All four witnesses agree that the door had been locked on the inside. There was deadly silence as they entered the house. When they forced the door, there was no one. All windows were in two rooms were closed and locked. The door between the rooms was closed, but unlocked. The front door leading into the corridor was locked and the key was on the inside. The whole house was searched. Only one room on the fourth floor, which was full of garbage, had its door slightly open. It is a four-story building with garrets. A trap-door on the roof was nailed. However, the witnesses cannot agree on the time that passed between the screaming and the forcing of the door where it all had happened. Some say three, other say five. [16]

Two others were Alfonzo Garcio, undertaker, and Alberto Montani, pastry and cake maker. Both men were a part of the crowd who entered the house, but Garcio did not follow them inside. He admits he heard the argument. He is a Spaniard, but lives in the Rue Morgue. He thinks the shrill voice belongs to an Englishman, although he cannot speak English. Montani, on the other hand, claims he gruff voice to belong to a Frenchman and the second to a Russian. He never met a Russian.

It is also known that the chimneys are too small for a man to fit in. The body of Mademoiselle was stuck in it. There is also no back stairway.

Paul Dumas and Alexandre Etienne, doctor and surgeon, have the same opinions. The doctor says that both bodies were badly mutilated. The young woman had been throttled by one or two persons. Her body was bruised with scars. The older woman had many broken bones. Her wounds could have been caused by a club or by something very heavy. No woman is able to manipulate such a thing. Her throat must have been cut by a sharp instrument. No such murder had been committed in Paris so far. The police are clueless.

The evening edition of the newspaper informs Adolphe Le Bon has been arrested, although nothing else came to light. Dupin shows his apparent interest for this case. It all starts when his companion says it is impossible to solve this murder. Dupin doubts the abilities of Parisian Police; he sees no sophisticated method in their investigation. It is a mistake to look at things from too close up. He wants to find the information on the surface because when we dig too deep we can get confused. He suggests verifying the pieces of information about the murder; he finds it adventurous. Dupin and the narrator go and see the crime scene. The Frenchman wants to see the building from behind and its surroundings. After a while they come back and enter the room where the young lady had been killed. Dupin scans everything, even the bodies. They also explore the yard and other rooms of the house.

The next day Dupin states that the Police are mistaking the unusual with the incomprehensible. If they want to solve this murder they should ask not "What happened here?" but "What happened here that had never happened before?" Dupin then awaits a person to enter their room. He thinks this person must have been involved in the crime. They wait with guns to capture this man. While waiting, Dupin explains further. The testimonies agree that the gruff voice belonged to a Frenchman, however, when it comes to the second voice, a Spaniard, an Italian, an Englishman, a Hollander and a Frenchman claims the voice to be foreign. The voice must have sounded really weird, Dupin comments.

Since he believes no supernatural creature was involved, he tries to think how the perpetrator or perpetrators got away. The considerable options are - the room where Mademoiselle was killed and the room next-door.

They already knew from the Police that there is no secret passage leading out of the house; Dupin confirms it. He excludes the chimneys. Only possibilities were windows. The front windows can be also excluded, but the windows leading to the yard were sufficient. Both of them were fastened with sashes. The possibility is apparently small but it does not mean it could not have happened like this, Dupin comments. There was a bed in front of one window; the second was free. The free one was perfectly fine, but after examining the second one, he finds out that the window has the power of fastening itself. The mystery almost clarified.

It is also cleared to Dupin how had the murderers gotten away. Although he points out that the villain would have to be extremely lithe and able to jump. He speaks about almost supernatural swiftness. His goal is to combine this swiftness and the shrill voice which sounded foreign to several foreigners. At this point of time, the narrator, who silently listens to Dupin, has an idea where his French friend heading.

Dupin pays no attention and continues. The thieves did not steal four thousand francs, but they stole a pack of clothes. He quickly destroys the presumption that someone killed both women for money. He comes back to the mutilated bodies; he still keeps in mind the shrill voice, the peculiar agility and the absence of motive. He takes an imaginary look on the bodies and he comes to a conclusion. It must have been a monster with great strength so that he could thrust the body up the chimney. He even considers the tresses of hair with bulbs; it confirms his previous thought. Dupin further comments that the bruises on Madame's body must have been caused, when she hit the stone pavement in the yard.

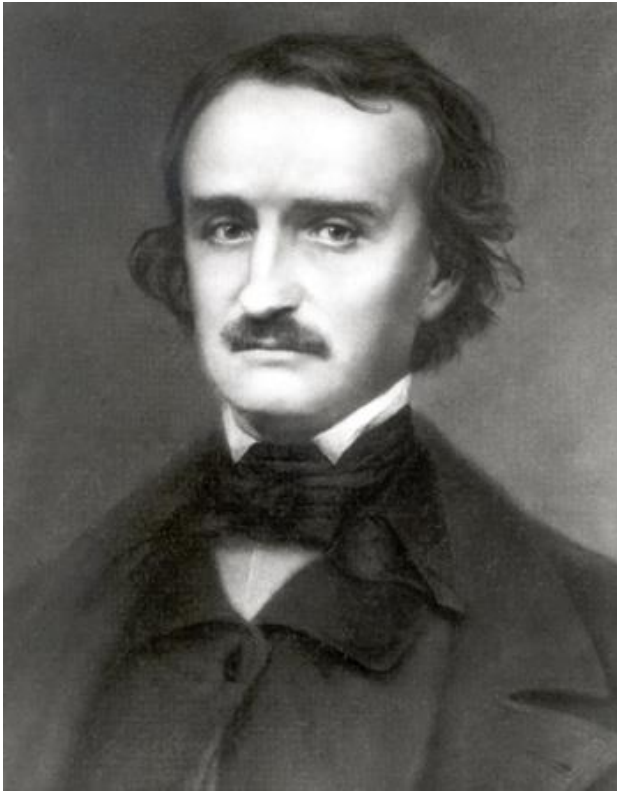
Dupin combines all the elements. Then, he shows a tress of inhuman hairs, which he found in Madame's hand, to his companion. Dupin also shows him an article about the large fulvous Orang-Outang. The narrator is still left puzzled. According to the witnesses, there were two people, one of them a Frenchman. Dupin presumes the Frenchman can be innocent, the animal could have escaped. However, he stops here and hands a paper to the narrator. Dupin published an advertisement last night, in the section

dedicated to mariners. It says that they had caught an Ourang-Outang and its owner is supposed to come to their house. It is not clear to the narrator what led Dupin to a conclusion that the Frenchman was a mariner on a Maltese vessel. Dupin's only clue was a piece of ribbon he had found. There was a specific knot on it.

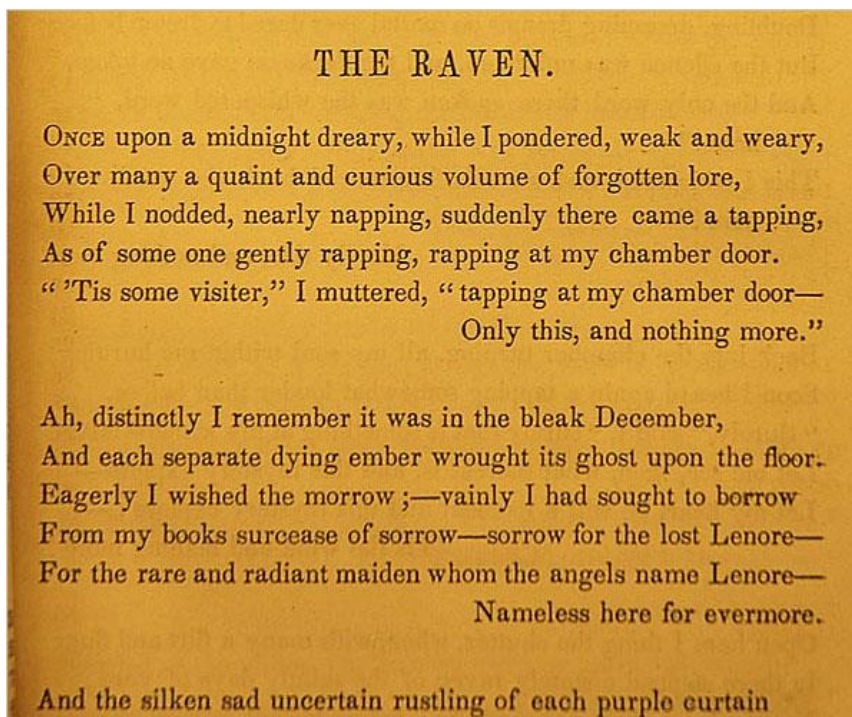
He foresees the behaviour of the mariner. They hear somebody coming and have their guns prepared. Suddenly a man appeared; apparently a mariner. He was a native-born Parisian. Dupin keep playing a game he created. He confirms to the mariner that the Ourang-Outang is safe at a livery stable; it can be picked up tomorrow. The mariner gladly offers a reward for catching it. Dupin wants to know what had happened in the Rue Morgue. The mariner explains. He had wanted to sell the monkey but it got away with his razor in its hands. He chased it. He saw the monkey to climb into an open window on the fourth floor. The window belonged to Madame L'Esplanade. The mariner followed the creature. He only peeped into the room. When both women saw the monkey the screams began. It killed the old lady with the razor and then the other one. When it saw his owner, it became scared. It started to smash the furniture and it thrust the body up the chimney. Then it also threw the other body through the window. When the mariner saw this he ran away, no longer taking care about the ape.

The story ends when the ape is caught, Le Bon is released. The police do not quite appreciate what Dupin had done for them, but he is pleased with himself.

## Appendix II



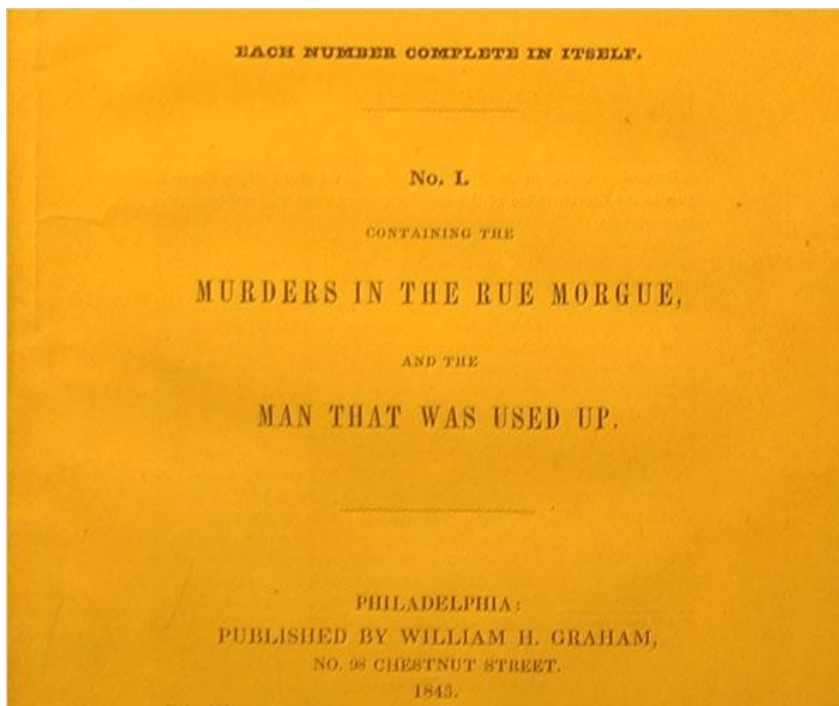
**Picture 1. Portrait of Edgar Allan Poe**



**Picture 2. A passage from Poe’s poem “The Raven”**



**Picture 2. *Edgar Allan Poe***



**Picture 3. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* reprinted in 1843**

### **Picture 1**

*The Portrait of Edgar Allan Poe* [online]. The New York Times. 2013. [Retrieved 2013-04-20]. Available from: <<http://www.poemuseum.org/images/bruckmann-poe-portrait.jpg>>.

### **Picture 2**

*The Raven* [online]. The New York Times. 2013. [Retrieved 2013-04-20]. Available from: <<http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2009/01/14/books/TheRavenP1.jpg>>.

### **Picture 3**

*Edgar Allan Poe* [online]. The New York Times. 2013. [Retrieved 2013-04-20]. Available from: <<http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2009/01/14/books/PoePortrait.jpg>>.

### **Picture 4**

The Murders in the Rue Morgue reprinted [online]. The New York Times. 2013. [Retrieved 2013-04-20]. Available from: <[http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2009/01/14/books/RueMorgue-DSC\\_6909.jpg](http://graphics8.nytimes.com/images/2009/01/14/books/RueMorgue-DSC_6909.jpg)>.

## Appendix III

### The Murders in the Rue Morgue

Edgar Allan Poe (1841)

A passage taken from the original text, The Murders in the Rue Morgue, written by Edgar Allan Poe. Taken from: Classic Literature.

*What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, although puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture. --*

*Sir Thomas Browne.*

*THE mental features discoursed of as the analytical, are, in themselves, but little susceptible of analysis. We appreciate them only in their effects. We know of them, among other things, that they are always to their possessor, when inordinately possessed, a source of the liveliest enjoyment. As the strong man exults in his physical ability, delighting in such exercises as call his muscles into action, so glories the analyst in that moral activity which disentangles. He derives pleasure from even the most trivial occupations bringing his talents into play. He is fond of enigmas, of conundrums, of hieroglyphics; exhibiting in his solutions of each a degree of acumen which appears to the ordinary apprehension preternatural. His results, brought about by the very soul and essence of method, have, in truth, the whole air of intuition. The faculty of re-solution is possibly much invigorated by mathematical study, and especially by that highest branch of it which, unjustly, and merely on account of its retrograde operations, has been called, as if par excellence, analysis. Yet to calculate is not in itself to analyze. A chess-player, for example, does the one without effort at the other. It follows that the game of chess, in its effects upon mental character, is greatly misunderstood. I am not now writing a treatise, but simply prefacing a somewhat peculiar narrative by observations very much at random; I will, therefore, take occasion to assert that the higher powers of the reflective intellect are more decidedly and more*



*usefully tasked by the unostentatious game of draughts than by all the elaborate frivolity of chess. In this latter, where the pieces have different and bizarre motions, with various and variable values, what is only complex is mistaken (a not unusual error) for what is profound. The attention is here called powerfully into play. If it flag for an instant, an oversight is committed, resulting in injury or defeat. The possible moves being not only manifold but involute, the chances of such oversights are multiplied; and in nine cases out of ten it is the more concentrative rather than the more acute player who conquers. In draughts, on the contrary, where the moves are unique and have but little variation, the probabilities of inadvertence are diminished, and the mere attention being left comparatively what advantages are obtained by either party are obtained by superior acumen. To be less abstract --Let us suppose a game of draughts where the pieces are reduced to four kings, and where, of course, no oversight is to be expected. It is obvious that here the victory can be decided (the players being at all equal) only by some recherche movement, the result of some strong exertion of the intellect. Deprived of ordinary resources, the analyst throws himself into the spirit of his opponent, identifies himself therewith, and not unfrequently sees thus, at a glance, the sole methods (sometimes indeed absurdly simple ones) by which he may seduce into error or hurry into miscalculation.*

*Whist has long been noted for its influence upon what is termed the calculating power; and men of the highest order of intellect have been known to take an apparently unaccountable delight in it, while eschewing chess as frivolous. Beyond doubt there is nothing of a similar nature so greatly tasking the faculty of analysis. The best chess-player in Christendom may be little more than the best player of chess; but proficiency in whist implies capacity for success in all these more important undertakings where mind struggles with mind. When I say proficiency, I mean that perfection in the game which includes a comprehension of all the sources whence legitimate advantage may be derived. These are not only manifold but multiform, and lie frequently among recesses of thought altogether inaccessible to the ordinary understanding. To observe attentively is to remember distinctly; and, so far, the concentrative chess-player will do very well at whist; while the rules of Hoyle (themselves*

based upon the mere mechanism of the game) are sufficiently and generally comprehensible. Thus to have a retentive memory, and to proceed by "the book," are points commonly regarded as the sum total of good playing. But it is in matters beyond the limits of mere rule that the skill of the analyst is evinced. He makes, in silence, a host of observations and inferences. So, perhaps, do his companions; and the difference in the extent of the information obtained, lies not so much in the validity of the inference as in the quality of the observation. The necessary knowledge is that of what to observe. Our player confines himself not at all; nor, because the game is the object, does he reject deductions from things external to the game. He examines the countenance of his partner, comparing it carefully with that of each of his opponents. He considers the mode of assorting the cards in each hand; often counting trump by trump, and honor by honor, through the glances bestowed by their holders upon each. He notes every variation of face as the play progresses, gathering a fund of thought from the differences in the expression of certainty, of surprise, of triumph, or chagrin. From the manner of gathering up a trick he judges whether the person taking it can make another in the suit. He recognizes what is played through feint, by the air with which it is thrown upon the table. A casual or inadvertent word; the accidental dropping or turning of a card, with the accompanying anxiety or carelessness in regard to its concealment; the counting of the tricks, with the order of their arrangement; embarrassment, hesitation, eagerness or trepidation --all afford, to his apparently intuitive perception, indications of the true state of affairs. The first two or three rounds having been played, he is in full possession of the contents of each hand, and thenceforward puts down his cards with as absolute a precision of purpose as if the rest of the party had turned outward the faces of their own.

The analytical power should not be confounded with simple ingenuity; for while the analyst is necessarily ingenious, the ingenious man often remarkably incapable of analysis. The constructive or combining power, by which ingenuity is usually manifested, and which the phrenologists (I believe erroneously) have assigned a separate organ, supposing it a primitive faculty, has been so frequently seen in those whose intellect bordered otherwise upon idiocy,

as to have attracted general observation among writers on morals. Between ingenuity and the analytic ability there exists a difference far greater, indeed, than that between the fancy and the imagination, but of a character very strictly analogous. It will found, in fact, that the ingenious are always fanciful, and the truly imaginative never otherwise than analytic.

The narrative which follows will appear to the reader somewhat in the light of a commentary upon the propositions just advanced.

Residing in Paris during the spring and part of the summer of 18--, I there became acquainted with a Monsieur C. Auguste Dupin. This young gentleman was of an excellent --indeed of an illustrious family, but, by a variety of untoward events, had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world, or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes. By courtesy of his creditors, there still remained in his possession a small remnant of his patrimony; and, upon the income arising from this, he managed, by means of a rigorous economy, to procure the necessities of life, without troubling himself about its superfluities. Books, indeed, were his sole luxuries, and in Paris these are easily obtained.

Our first meeting was at an obscure library in the Rue Montmartre, where the accident of our both being in search of the same very rare and very remarkable volume, brought us into closer communion. We saw each other again and again. I was deeply interested in the little family history which he detailed to me with all that candor which a Frenchman indulges whenever mere self is the theme. I was astonished, too, at the vast extent of his reading; and, above all, I felt my soul enkindled within me by the wild fervor, and the vivid freshness of his imagination. Seeking in Paris the objects I then sought, I felt that the society of such a man would be to me a treasure beyond price; and this feeling I frankly confided to him. It was at length arranged that we should live together during my stay in the city; and as my worldly circumstances were somewhat less embarrassed than his own, I was permitted to be at the expense of renting, and furnishing in a style which suited the rather fantastic gloom of our common temper, a time-eaten and grotesque mansion,

*long deserted through superstitions into which we did not inquire, and tottering to its fall in a retired and desolate portion of the Faubourg St. Germain.*

*Had the routine of our life at this place been known to the world, we should have been regarded as madmen --although, perhaps, as madmen of a harmless nature. Our seclusion was perfect. We admitted no visitors. Indeed the locality of our retirement had been carefully kept a secret from my own former associates; and it had been many years since Dupin had ceased to know or be known in Paris. We existed within ourselves alone.*

*It was a freak of fancy in my friend (for what else shall I call it?) to be enamored of the Night for her own sake; and into this bizarrerie, as into all his others, I quietly fell; giving myself up to his wild whims with a perfect abandon. The sable divinity would not herself dwell with us always; but we could counterfeit her presence. At the first dawn of the morning we closed all the massy shutters of our old building; lighted a couple of tapers which, strongly perfumed, threw out only the ghastliest and feeblest of rays. By the aid of these we then busied our souls in dreams --reading, writing, or conversing, until warned by the clock of the advent of the true Darkness. Then we sallied forth into the streets, arm and arm, continuing the topics of the day, or roaming far and wide until a late hour, seeking, amid the wild lights and shadows of the populous city, that infinity of mental excitement which quiet observation can afford....*